SUKI™

A LIKE STORY

3

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Manga
Drama/Romance
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SUKI

HINATA ASAHI IS THE HAPPIEST GIRL YOU'D EVER HOPE TO MEET. WHAT'S MOST REMARKABLE IS THAT SHE'S KEPT THAT UPBEAT PERSONALITY AFTER HAVING BEEN THE VICTIM OF MULTIPLE KIDNAPPINGS. EVER SINCE HER NEW HOMEROOM TEACHER, SHIRO ASOU, MOVED IN NEXT DOOR, HINA'S ALL BUT FORGOTTEN HER TRAUMATIC PAST—AFTER ALL, SHE'S IN LOVE WITH ASOU-SENSEI! BUT WHEN YOUR DAD IS AS WEALTHY AS HINA'S IS, THE THREAT OF KIDNAPPING DOESN'T GO AWAY... AND IT'S ABOUT TO CATCH UP WITH HINA ONE LAST TIME.

100% AUTHENTIC MANGA

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"I LIKE YOU.
THAT'S WHY I LIKE YOU."

Today's lesson:

Suki

Vol. 3.

By CLAMP

New Vocabulary

"Suki" – To Like

"Daisuki" – To Love

"Suki Dakara Suki" – "I Like You, That's Why I Like You"

Homework

Pgs. 1-192

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THE STORY SO FAR...

FIRST-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HINATA ASAHI LEADS A SOLITARY LIFE, WITH ONLY HER TWO TEDDY BEARS TO KEEP HER COMPANY. THAT IS, UNTIL THE MYSTERIOUS SHIRO ASOU MOVES IN NEXT DOOR. THIS TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME MAN ISN'T JUST HINA'S NEIGHBOR—HE'S ALSO HER NEW TEACHER! HINA'S FRIENDS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THE NEW TEACHER, AND FOR GOOD REASON. AFTER ALL, COULD A MAN NEARLY TWICE HINA'S AGE HAVE GOOD INTENTIONS? WHATEVER ASOU'S INTENTIONS TOWARD HINA ARE, THEY'RE MORE THAN THOSE OF A TEACHER TOWARD A STUDENT. UNBEKNOWNST TO HINA, ASOU HAS BEEN SPYING ON HER WITH SECRET SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS AND DISCUSSING HER, HIS "JOB," WITH SHADY ASSOCIATES. WHEN WE LEFT OFF, THE EVER-TRUSTING HINA HAD INVITED ASOU-SENSEI AND HIS "FRIENDS" OVER FOR DINNER. WHEN THE LIGHTS SUDDENLY SHUT OFF...

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Suki Vol. 3

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SUKI™

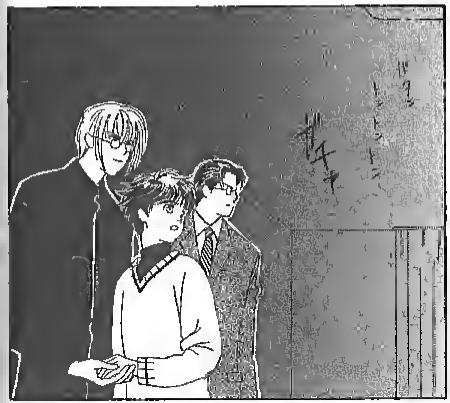
I LOVE YOU AFTER ALL!
I TRULY LOVE YOU.

DO YOU LOVE ME?

OKAY.
DON'T MAKE A SOUND
STAND UP SLOWLY
YOUR HOUSE IS SET TO 80 AMPERES. THE POWER SHOULDN'T GO OUT SO EASILY.
MAYBE THE FUSES WENT OUT...
MY BACK... IT FEELS SO WARM.
TOMO-AKI-SAN

KIZU!
SENSEI!
STAY HERE.
BEEP
カチン
BEEP
WHAT WAS THAT?!

SHIRO CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.
BUT SENSEI!

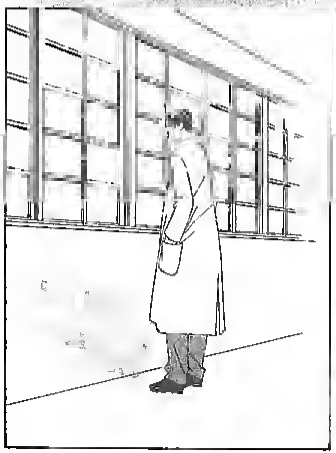


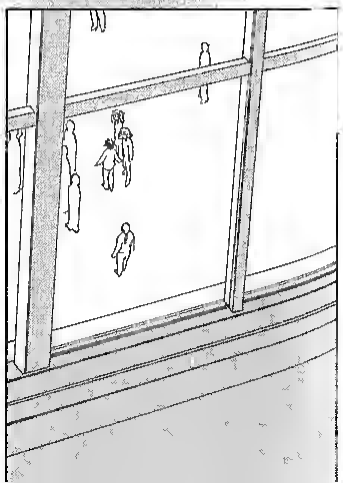
SENSEI!
HE GOT AWAY?
YEAH.
I HEARD FOOTSTEPS WAS SOMEONE INSIDE?

OH!
I WAS JUST KILLING TIME.
OH! I DIDN'T KNOW THEY MADE SOUNDS LIKE THAT THESE DAYS!
OH!
THAT WAS JUST MY CELL PHONE!
I REMEMBER! WHEN THE GLASS BROKE AND I HEARD THAT "BEEEP" SOUND!
IT CAME FROM YOUR POCKET.
WHAT WAS IT?
... IF WE WERE DEALING WITH ANYONE BUT HINA-CHAN,
I THINK SHIRO'S COVER WOULD HAVE BEEN BLOWN LONG AGO.
WH, T... COINCIDENCE! IT REALLY SURPRISED ME.
BUT WHY WOULD A PROFESSIONAL BAD PERSON BE IN MY HOUSE?
?
...AT DOING BAD THINGS.
WELL, JUDGING FROM ALL THE NOISE HE MADE, AND ALL THE GLASS HE BROKE, I'D SAY HE WASN'T A PROFESSIONAL.
PROFESSIONAL?
PROFESSIONAL... AT WHAT?
WAIT COME TO THINK OF IT...
.....
..LOOK...
HOW DID YOU KNOW THE AMPERE LEVEL OF MY HOUSE, ANYWAY?
...SENSEI!
WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT, SENSEI?
YOU SAW THE ELECTRICAL PANEL FOR MY HOUSE?
WELL, UH
...I JUST HAPPENED TO SEE IT THE OTHER DAY

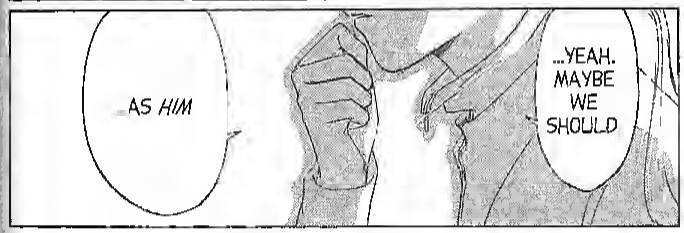
WOWWW
YOU DID IT! YOU MUST HAVE JUMPED AT LEAST YOUR OWN HEIGHT!
THAT WAS GREAT, HINA!
WHOA, COOL!
OOPSIE DAISY
HEY, COME ON, THE REST OF YOU! HURRY UP AND JUMP!
YOU'RE LIKE A MONKEY!
IT'S AMAZING
YOU'RE ALMOST TOO GOOD
HOW DO YOU DO IT, HINA?
IT'S GETTING CHILLY THESE DAYS,
BUT HINA'S JUST AS ENERGETIC AS EVER!
WELL, I'VE SEARCHED ALL THE SCHOOL RECORDS
BUT I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING
ABOUT ASOU-SENSEI.
SO--
FIND ANYTHING OUT ABOUT ASOU-CHI?

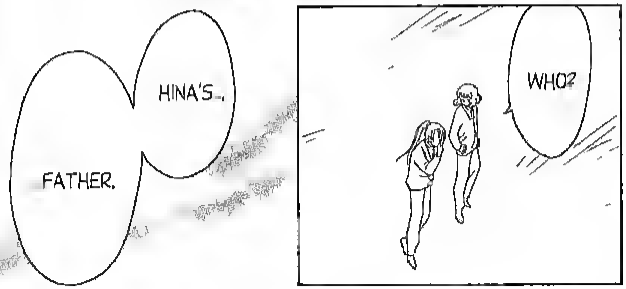
HE IS THE SCHOOL CHAIRMAN, AFTER ALL.
OH YEAH!!





MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL THE BOARD OF EDUCATION?
DUNNO. NONE OF THE OTHER TEACHERS KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM, EITHER...
WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT MEANS?


AS HIM
...YEAH. MAYBE WE SHOULD


HINA'S...
FATHER.
WHO?

YOU'RE SO MUCH LIKE HER...
-HINATA ASAHI.
I KNOW I'LL BE SAFE WITH YOU, ASOU-SAN.
YOU'LL PROTECT ME, WON'T YOU, ASOU-SAN?
-I LOVE YOU...
-ASOU-SAN...
I LOVE YOU...
-SENSEI!
...I JUST FEEL SO AT EASE WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME, ASOU-SAN
ASOU-SAN.

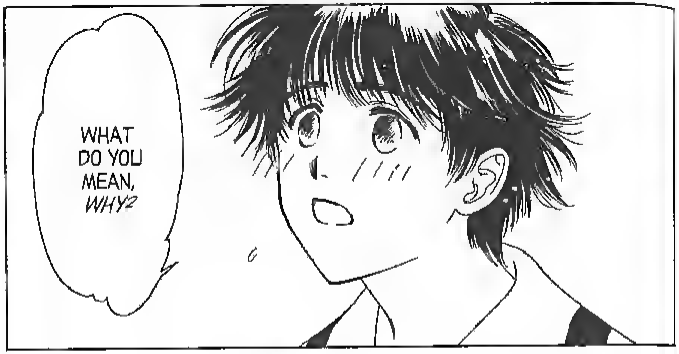
LOOK OUT! ASOU-SAN!!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN BY LOVING SOMEONE LIKE ME.
I DON'T EVER WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN.

SENSEI?
I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
: ASOU-SAN..

I WAS THINKING IT WOULD BE NICE IF WE COULD ALWAYS BE TOGETHER LIKE THIS, ASOU-SAN...
YOU LOOK SAD, SENSEI.
DID SOMETHING BAD HAPPEN?
DID SOMEONE DO SOMETHING BAD TO YOU, SENSEI?
THAT'S NOT TRUE! YOU'RE UNHAPPY! I CAN TELL!
I'M NOT.

AND IF WE SHOULD CROSS A KANGAROO'S PATH WE MIGHT GET PULLED INTO A BIG BOXING MATCH. BUT I WON'T BE AFRAID 'CUZ I'VE GOT SENSEI!
I'M WALKING BACK HOME WITH SENSEI TODAY. EVEN ON DARK STREETS I KNOW I'LL BE OKAY!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING?

I WORRY BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.
WHY WOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT?
BECAUSE..
..BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, SENSEI.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO EVER GET HURT..
..BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN, *WHY?*

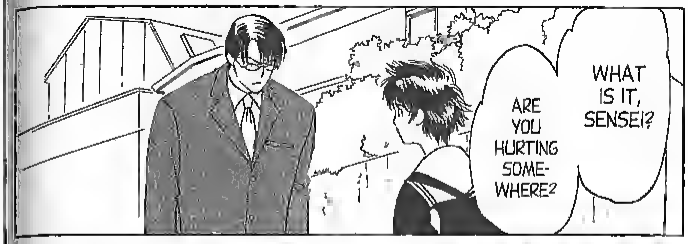
I MEAN THE REASON.
WHY YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME.

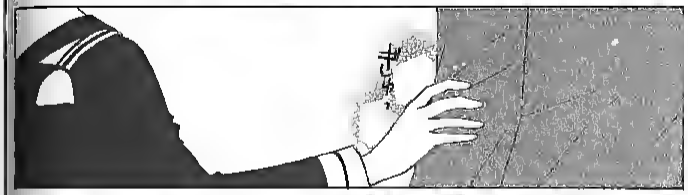
WHY?
...WHY WOULD YOU LOVE SOMEONE LIKE ME?

YOU DO ALL THE THINGS I LOVE...
SENSEI.
THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU.
...JUST HAPPENED, EH?
ギュッ

AND EVEN THOUGH I'M JUST YOUR STUDENT YOU'VE TREATED ME SO NICELY!
WELL YOU JUST HAPPENED TO MOVE IN NEXT DOOR TO ME
AND YOU JUST HAPPENED TO BECOME MY HOMEROOM TEACHER

... YOU SAID I "JUST HAPPENED" TO DO ALL THOSE THINGS.
THAT I "JUST HAPPENED" TO MOVE IN NEXT DOOR.
"JUST HAPPENED" TO BECOME YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER.
AND I "JUST HAPPENED" TO SAVE YOU WHENEVER YOU WERE IN TROUBLE.


WHAT IS IT, SENSEI?
ARE YOU HURTING SOME-WHERE?



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

WHAT IF I WEREN'T SIMPLY YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER OR YOUR NEIGHBOR?
I'M SAYING, WHAT IF NONE OF THAT "JUST HAPPENED"?
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY THEN?

...BUT WHAT IF NONE OF THOSE THINGS WERE COINCIDENCE?
HUH?

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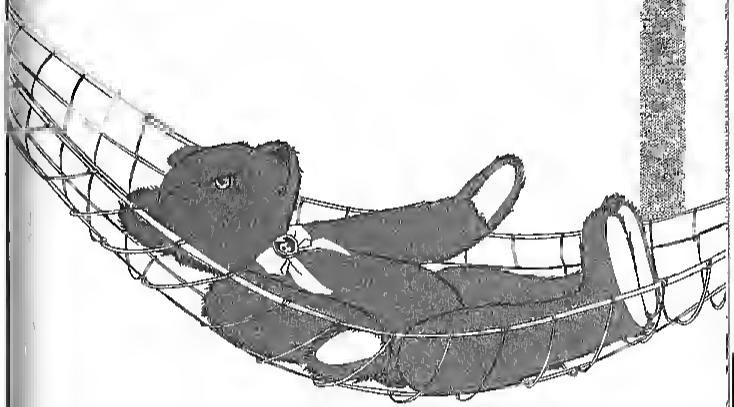
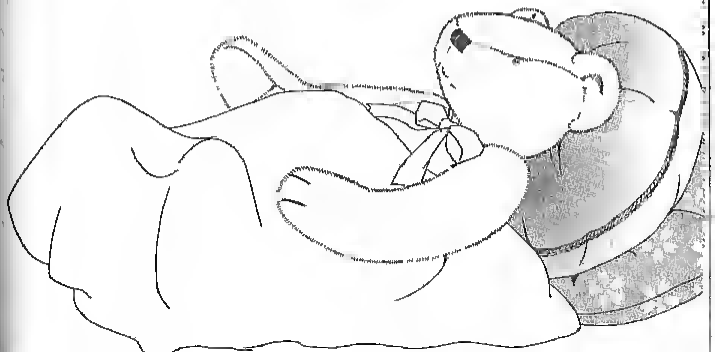
To Next

I'M FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU MORE AND MORE.
I'LL LOVE YOU ALWAYS, FOREVER AND EVER.

BUT THIS LOVE...WILL IT...





THEN ...IT'S ME THEY WANT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
RUN!
WHY IS THAT CAR CHASING US?!
WHAT?! WHY WOULD IT BE ME?!
FROM YOU?!
THEY MUST WANT SOMETHING!

HOLD IT, HINA!
YOU IDIOT!
NO! YOU SHOULDN'T COME!
JUST— WAIT!
NO! DON'T COME NEAR ME!

IF THOSE PEOPLE IN THE CAR WANT SOMETHING FROM ME, THEN YOU SHOULDN'T BE INVOLVED, SENSEI
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING...?!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL SEE YOU LATER, SENSEI!

JUST --STAY BY MY SIDE!
ALL RIGHT?!
HINATA.
OKAY.

STOP RUNNING AWAY FROM ME!!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, SENSEI!

KI...
SHI
TANI...

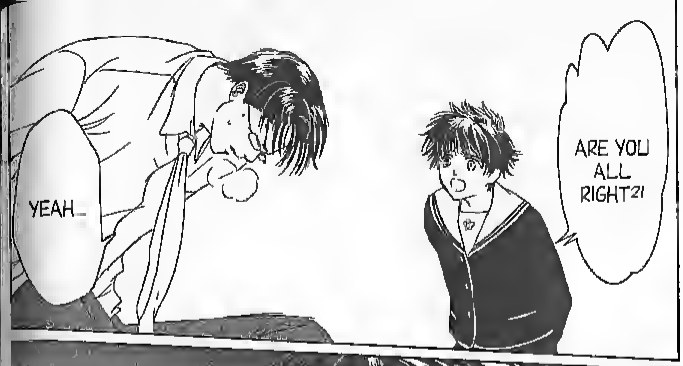
EMI-CHAN!
KISHITANI--
IT'S DANGEROUS
HERE! GET
AWAY FROM
HERE, NOW!

SENSEI!
SENSEI--
WHAT
HAPPENED?!
DON'T
WORRY.
HE'S JUST
UNCONSCIOUS
EMI-
CHAN?
WILL
YOU JUST
COME WITH
ME, HINA?

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
ASOU AND ASAHI-SAN HAVE DISAPPEARED.
...I GUESS HINA-CHAN ISN'T GOING TO DROP BY TODAY.
I'VE STARTED EXPECTING HER OUT OF HABIT.
WELCOME.

OW...!
SENSEI!
OH, I'M SO GLAD...
...I KEPT CALLING OUT TO YOU, SENSEI, BUT YOU WOULDN'T WAKE UP!
THAT STUN GUN'S BEEN MODIFIED...
ITS VOLTAGE IS MUCH HIGHER...
...THAN IN STORE-BOUGHT MODELS

NO. I *DO* HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS.

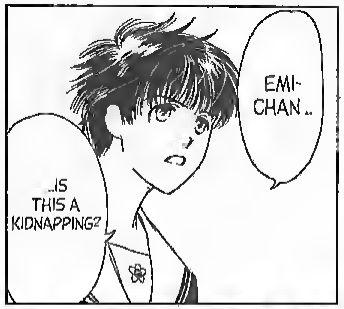


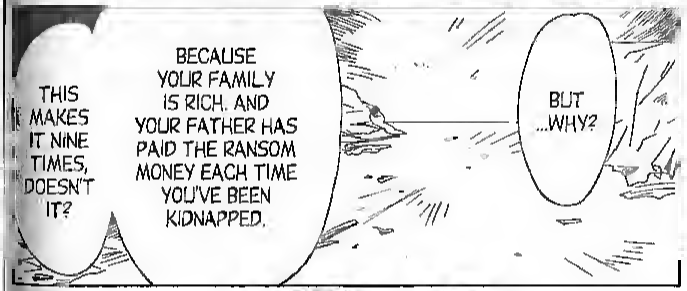
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS KIDNAPPING!
IT'S NOT PATHETIC, SENSEI! YOU'RE JUST A TEACHER!
IT'S PATHETIC...
.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...HAVE PLENTY TO DO WITH IT
I'M SORRY, HINA...YOUR HANDS MUST HURT.
YOUR FATHER WILL BE PAYING THE RANSOM MONEY SOON ENOUGH.
PLEASE, JUST BEAR WITH IT A LITTLE LONGER.

MY FATHER FAILED IN HIS BUSINESS.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO USE IT FOR?
TO PAY BACK OUR DEBTS
SO .YOU JUST WANT MONEY?
YES

THE PEOPLE HE OWES WERE IN THAT CAR THAT WAS CHASING YOU.
AND IT'S REALLY BAD NOW.
IT'S THE USUAL STORY. HE BORROWED FROM SOME UNSAVORY TYPES, AND NOW HE'S IN A BIG HOLE.
...I SEE.

THAT'S RIGHT.


EMI-CHAN..
...IS THIS A KIDNAPPING?


THIS MAKES IT NINE TIMES, DOESN'T IT?
BECAUSE YOUR FAMILY IS RICH. AND YOUR FATHER HAS PAID THE RANSOM MONEY EACH TIME YOU'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED.
BUT ...WHY?

SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS. SHE JUST TOLD ME BECAUSE SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
TOUKO TOLD ME.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THAT?

BUT ASOU-SENSEI HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!
...YOU'RE ANGRY, AREN'T YOU, HINA.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE HAVING SOME TOUGH TIMES
I'M NOT ANGRY ABOUT YOU KIDNAPPING ME, EMI-CHAN.
BUT SENSEI HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS! AND YOU HURT HIM AND BROUGHT HIM HERE! THAT'S WHY I'M ANGRY!
YOU REALLY *DO* LOVE SENSEI, DON'T YOU, HINA
YES.

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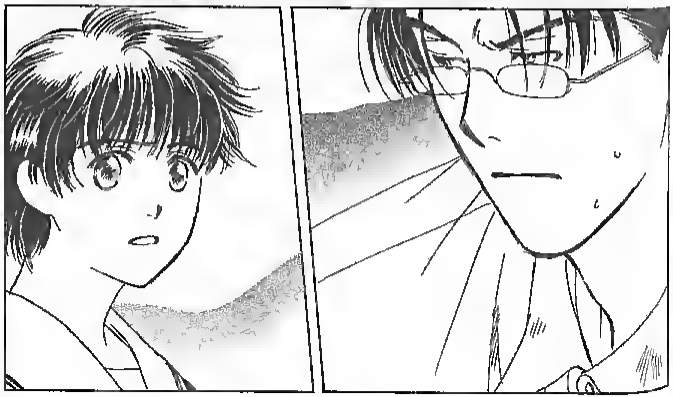
SUKI

HUH?
WELL, SENSEI *DOES* HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SENSEI?
To Next

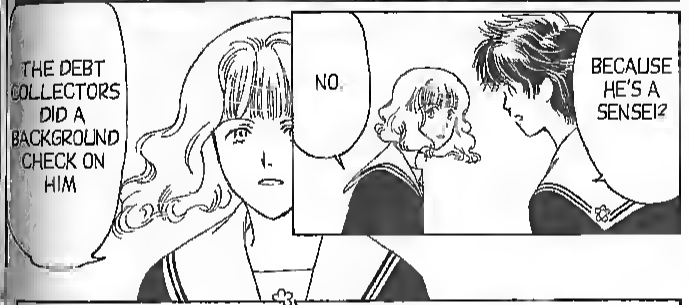


I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.
I REALLY DO.

BUT MY LOVE FOR YOU MUST REMAIN A SECRET.

HE WAS HIRED BY YOUR FATHER TO PROTECT YOU, HINA.
A FREELANCE BODYGUARD
THEN HE BECAME A FREELANCER.
HE WAS IN THEIR SECURITY UNIT, BUT HE QUIT.

SENSEI'S *REAL* JOB IS TO PROTECT YOU, HINA.

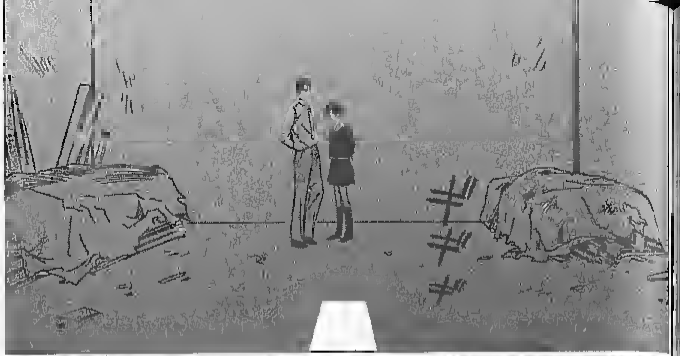

THE DEBT COLLECTORS DID A BACKGROUND CHECK ON HIM
NO.
BECAUSE HE'S A SENSEI?

SENSEI USED TO BE WITH THE SECRET POLICE.

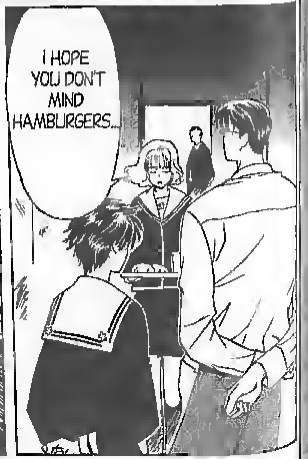
IN A WORD, YES.
...YOU'RE TELLING ME I CAN'T DO MY JOB?
JUST WAIT. I'LL BRING YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.
IS WHAT SHE SAID REALLY TRUE...?
ALL RIGHT, ALREADY! I'M COMING!
I PROMISE I WON'T HURT YOU, HINA. I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE THIS, BUT PLEASE, JUST KEEP QUIET.
AND I KNOW YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL, SENSEI. BUT SO ARE THOSE GUYS OUTSIDE THE DOOR AND THEY CAN BE QUITE SADISTIC.
IF YOU TRY ANYTHING, HINATA MIGHT GET HURT... SO PLEASE... DON'T.

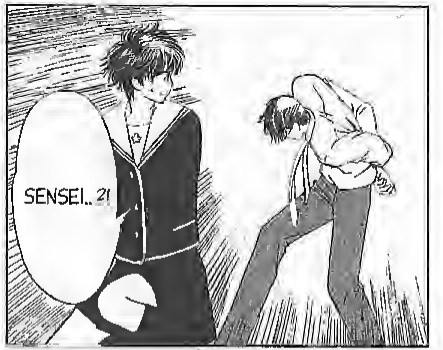
..THAT'S RIGHT.
I WAS HIRED BY YOUR FATHER.
THEN... WHEN YOU MOVED IN NEXT DOOR.
SINCE THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR WAS OPEN, YOUR FATHER MADE ARRANGEMENTS
. AND WHEN YOU BECAME MY HOMEROOM TEACHER .
SAME THING. YOUR FATHER IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL, AFTER ALL.
..BUT THEN...
THEN...

MOVE AWAY FROM ME
WE'LL TALK LATER



WHOA!!


I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND HAMBURGERS...

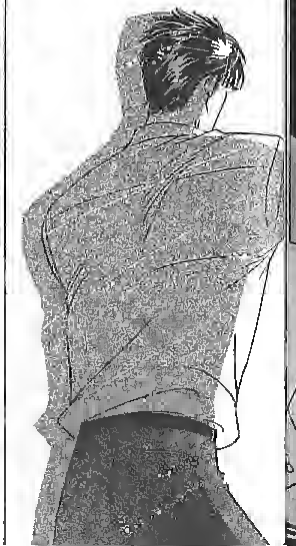

SENSEI..?!

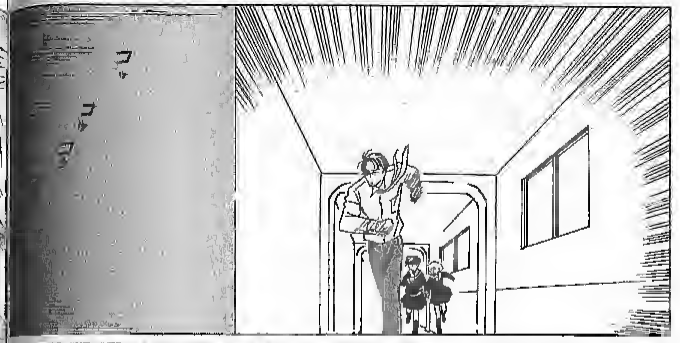
DON'T LEAVE MY SIDE.

LATER! LET'S GO!!
HOW DID YOU UNTIE YOURSELF?!
SHUT UP AND COME WITH US!!
I CAN'T
I'M
EMI-CHAN!

GREAT. HE FAINTED.
ｸﾞｯ

THEN...
BUT THEN...

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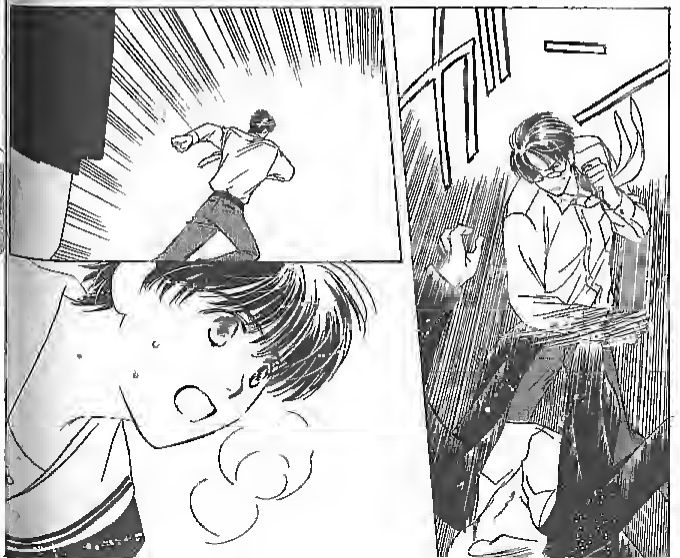


WATCH OUT!!
...THEN...TO SENSEI, I'M JUST...
...I'M JUST...
THERE'S THE EXIT!

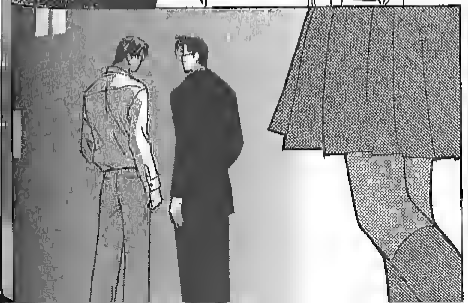
I BROKE MY THUMB
IF YOU BREAK YOUR THUMB, THE SHAPE OF YOUR FINGERS CHANGES, SO IT'S EASY TO UNTIE YOUR HANDS
...WHAT...?
WHEN YOU'RE TIED UP, IT'S THE QUICKEST WAY
...HOW DID YOU FIND US?
TOMOAKI-SAN SAID HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT ASAHI-SAN.
...NGHH!
WHAT IS IT?
AND I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T THINK I CAN HANDLE THINGS ON MY OWN...!

...I WANT TO HEAR THE REST OF IT.

I JUST... NEVER WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT EXPERIENCE AGAIN

...SO YOU REALLY DO WANT TO PROTECT ASAHI-SAN

BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON, IS IT?



SO...
SO...
...YOU JUST DID THOSE THINGS BECAUSE IT WAS YOUR JOB..?
...AND DOING ALL THE THINGS I LOVE...
...YOU JUST DID THOSE THINGS BECAUSE IT WAS YOUR JOB.?
IS THAT WHY..?
...I'M SORRY. I GUESS I JUST GOT CARRIED AWAY...
THANK YOU FOR RESCUING ME.

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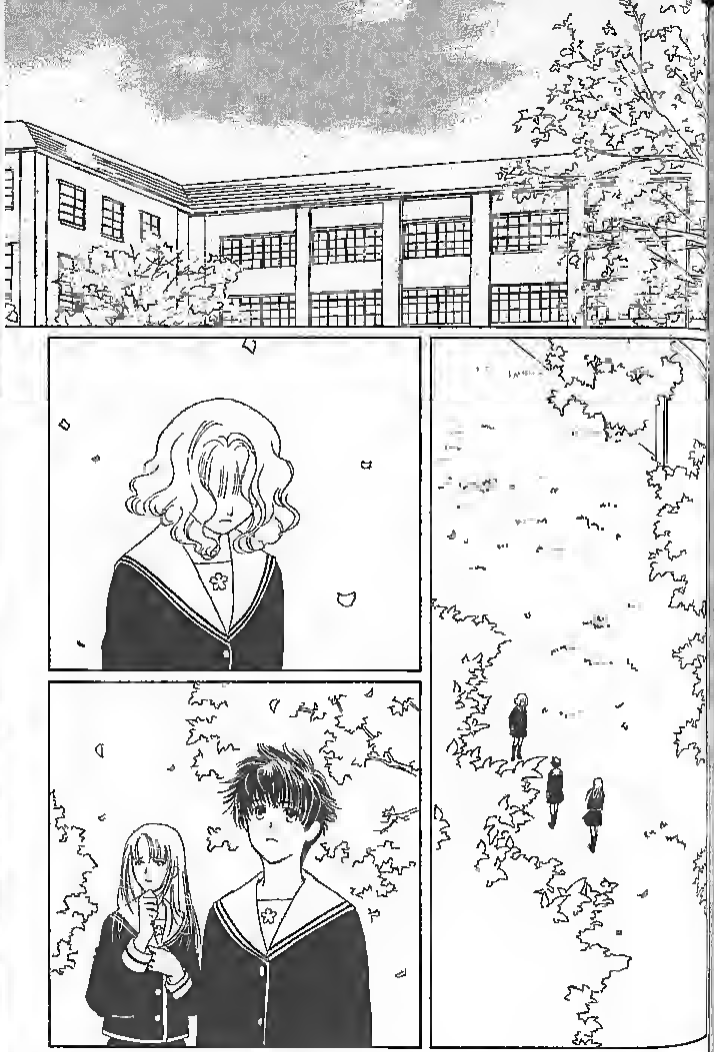
SUKI

B-BUT ...HINA...
LET'S GO, EMI-CHAN.
to Next



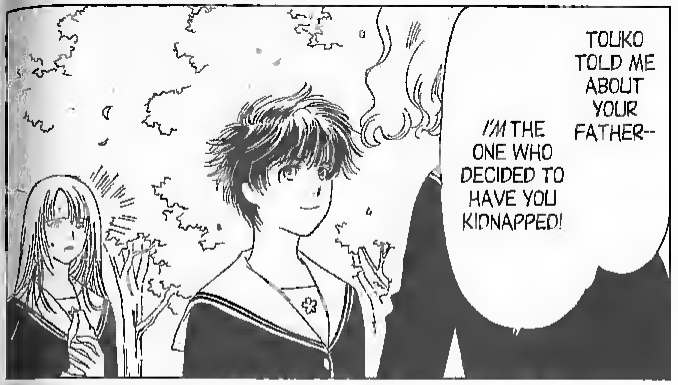
I'VE COME TO UNDERSTAND MANY THINGS ABOUT LOVE.
LOVE MAKES ONE THINK ABOUT A GREAT MANY THINGS.

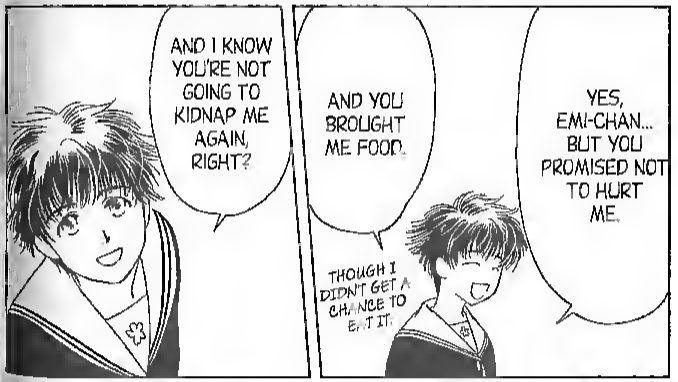
BUT THIS FEELING IS...

..HUH?
LET'S SHAKE ON IT!
YOU APOLOGIZED, EMI-CHAN, SO LET'S JUST SHAKE AND MAKE UP.
MAKE UP...
...BUT HINA! AFTER I PUT YOU THROUGH ALL THAT...!

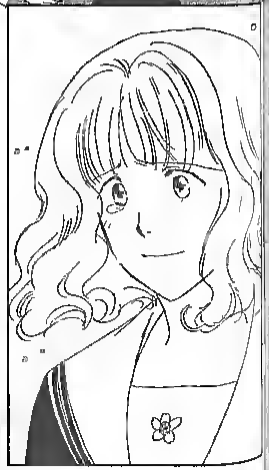
I'M SORRY.
BUT...
...I AM SORRY
I KNOW THIS ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN FORGIVE JUST BECAUSE I APOLOGIZE.

LET'S BE FRIENDS AGAIN!


TOUKO TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR FATHER--
I'M THE ONE WHO DECIDED TO HAVE YOU KIDNAPPED!


AND I KNOW YOU'RE NOT GOING TO KIDNAP ME AGAIN, RIGHT?
AND YOU BROUGHT ME FOOD.
THOUGH I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO EAT IT.
YES, EMI-CHAN... BUT YOU PROMISED NOT TO HURT ME.

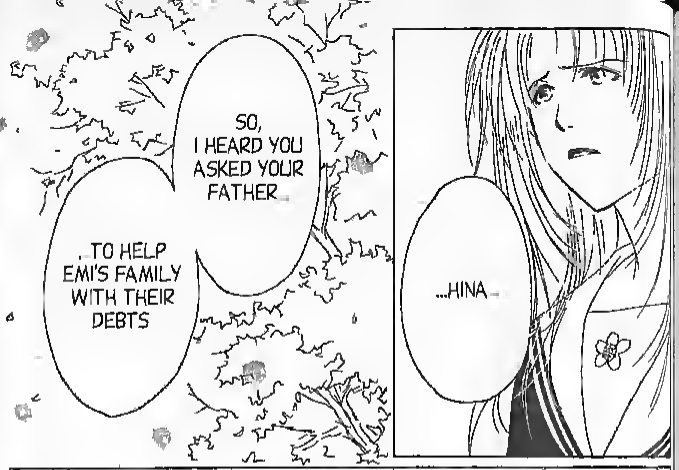
OH, HINA...
...YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD LITTLE GIRL!!

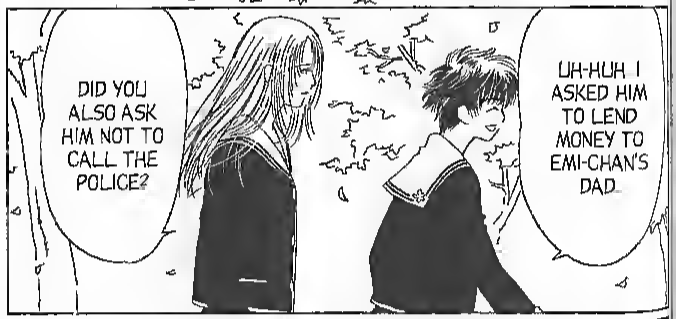


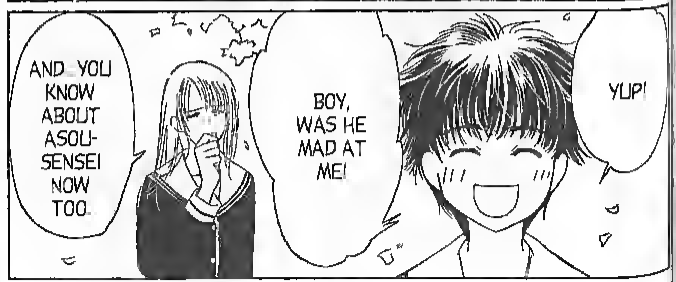
THEN IT'S SETTLED!
I WON'T.

WELL, YOU CAN BE MY FRIEND FROM NOW ON TOO...
...EMI-CHAN!
I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD BE A REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AFTER THIS.
SEE YA IN CLASS!
...OKAY!

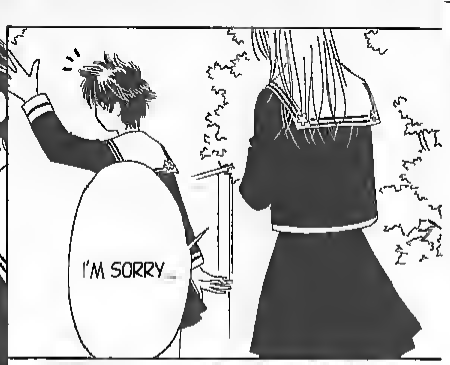
EMI-CHAN--I CAN'T BREATHE!
HEY, HEY--I CAN'T BREATHE, EMI-CHAN!
ぐたぼた
バタバタ
SHOULDN'T YOU GO SOON?
YOU HAVE HOMEROOM DAY DUTY TODAY-- RIGHT, EMI-CHAN?


SO, I HEARD YOU ASKED YOUR FATHER...
...TO HELP EMI'S FAMILY WITH THEIR DEBTS
...HINA...


DID YOU ALSO ASK HIM NOT TO CALL THE POLICE?
UH-HUH. I ASKED HIM TO LEND MONEY TO EMI-CHAN'S DAD...


AND...YOU KNOW ABOUT ASOU-SENSEI NOW TOO...
BOY, WAS HE MAD AT ME!
YUP!

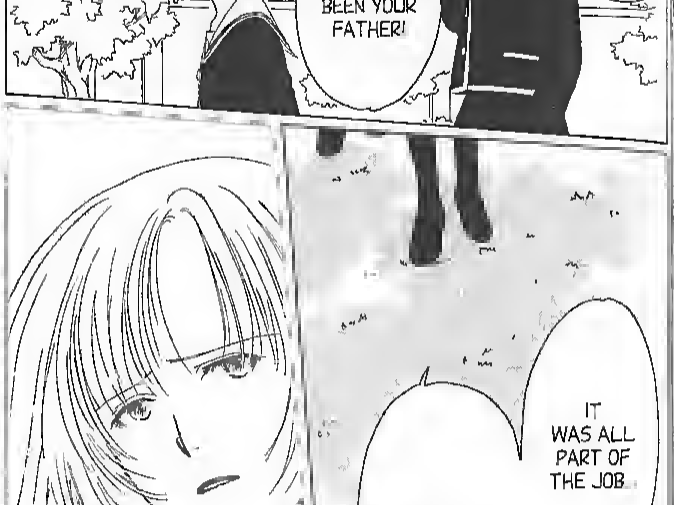
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING, TOUKO-CHAN?


I'M SORRY...

...SO I GOT TO BE FRIENDS WITH EMI-CHAN TOO!
BESIDES, YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH EMI-CHAN...

BECAUSE I TOLD EMI ABOUT YOUR FAMILY...
OH, THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS DO

YEP. HE TOLD ME SO.
...THAT MUST HAVE BEEN YOUR FATHER!
THEN ...THAT MAN SPEAKING TO ASOU-SENSEI AT THE MUSEUM...


IT WAS ALL PART OF THE JOB.
EVERYTHING SENSEI DID FOR ME

ASOU-SENSEI TURNED OUT TO BE JUST A BODYGUARD HIRED BY MY FATHER.
YES. I HEARD.

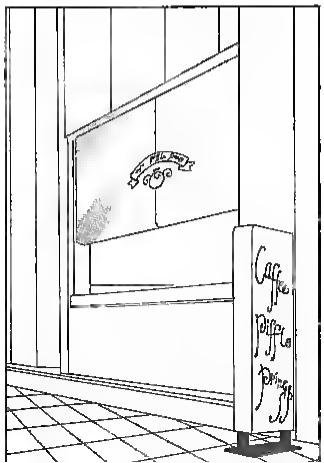
ALL THE THINGS I LOVE! ALL OF IT...
...WAS JUST PART OF HIS JOB.
. OH, HINA

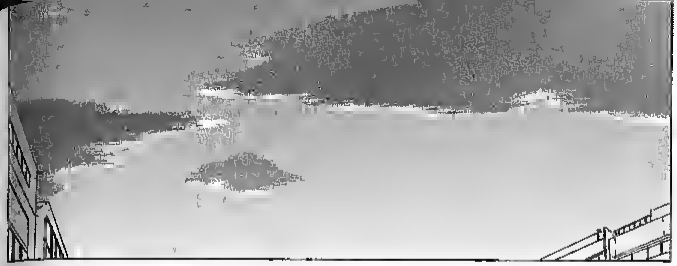
WALKING HOME WITH ME. EATING WITH ME.
HOLDING HANDS WITH ME
PROTECTING ME
SHARING HIS UMBRELLA WITH ME.
...ALL OF IT.
ALL OF IT...

NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
THEN SHE MUST HAVE HAD HER BABY!
IT'S MAEDA SENSEI!
CAN WE SEE YOUR BABY?
HEY SENSEI DID YOU GAIN WEIGHT?
BUT I'M BACK AGAIN, STARTING TODAY!
I'M SORRY I WAS AWAY FOR SO LONG
ASOU-SENSEI...

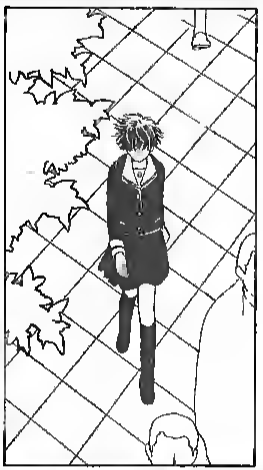
HEY SENSEI'S COMING SOON
YEAH WE BETTER SIT DOWN
1-D
HEY--IT'S SENSEI!
バタバタ
ASOU-SENSEI...

TOMO-KUN!


Caffè
Pepper
Pepper



NOT ONLY DID MY HOMEROOM TEACHER CHANGE.. MY CHEMISTRY TEACHER WAS DIFFERENT TOO.
I WONDER IF SENSEI QUIT?



HINA-CHAN?

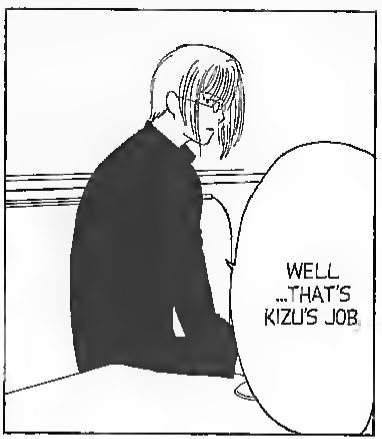
NO
NO
IT'S OKAY.
YOU'RE SENSEI'S FRIEND, TOMO-KUN. YOU COULDN'T BREAK YOUR PROMISE!
I'M SORRY. IN THE END, I WAS JUST DECEIVING YOU, HINA-CHAN.
HE DID RESCUE ME THAT ONE TIME, BUT I RAN OFF BEFORE I GOT A CHANCE TO THANK HIM PROPERLY!
OH! I SHOULD THANK KIZU-SAN TOO.
...YES.
THAT SENSEI WAS WITH ME JUST BECAUSE OF HIS JOB.
YOU KNEW ABOUT HIM, DIDN'T YOU, TOMO-KUN?
...YES.
DID SENSEI TELL YOU TO NOT TALK TO ME ABOUT IT?

...SINCE HE QUIT, HE'S WORKED AS MY PERSONAL BODYGUARD
TOMO-KUN-- ARE YOU IN DANGER?!

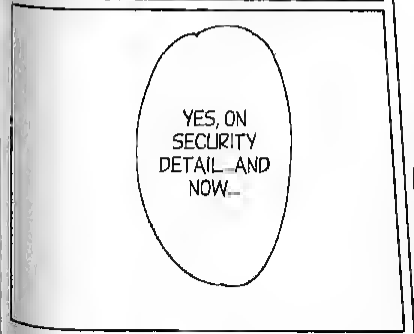
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?!
WHAT?! IS SOMEONE AFTER YOU?

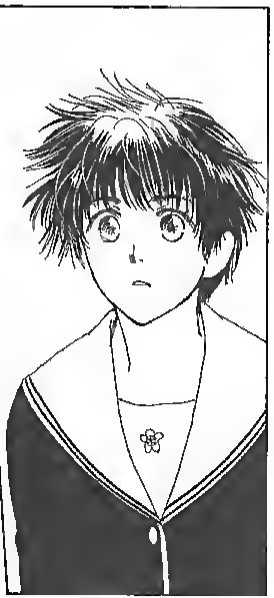
IT'S A LONG STORY.

KIZU IS A BODYGUARD TOO. FOR ME.
HUH?


WELL ...THAT'S KIZU'S JOB.

SO KIZU-SAN WORKED FOR THE SECRET POLICE, TOO?
YOU SEE, KIZU AND SHIRO ARE FORMER COLLEAGUES

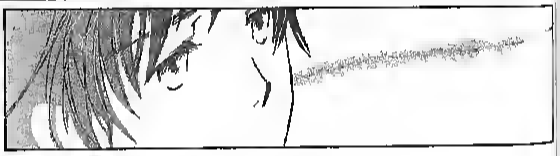

YES, ON SECURITY DETAIL... AND NOW...



YOU WEREN'T EVER HARMED, WERE YOU, HINA-CHAN?
NO. EVERYONE WAS SO NICE TO ME.
ALL NINE TIMES.
NO...THE TENTH TIME TOO.

WERE YOU KIDNAPPED TOO, TOMO-KUN?
OH, NO! DID THEY HURT YOU, OR DO SOMETHING BAD TO YOU?
YES... SEVERAL TIMES.
THE REASON I NEED PROTECTION IS RATHER SIMILAR TO YOURS, HINA-CHAN.
THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN THOUGH
THEY DID?
IT'S ALL IN THE PAST NOW

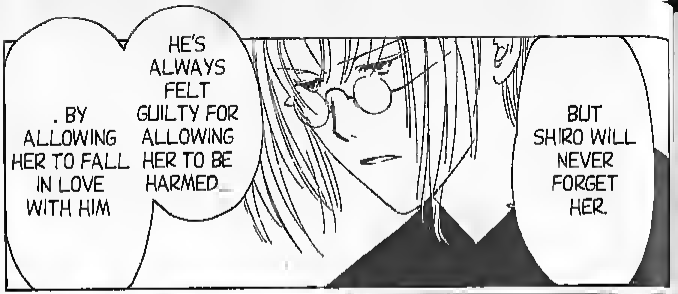
HINA-CHAN. YOU ONCE SAID YOU WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SHIRO.
DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT WAY?



BUT SENSEI RESCUED ME BECAUSE IT WAS HIS JOB

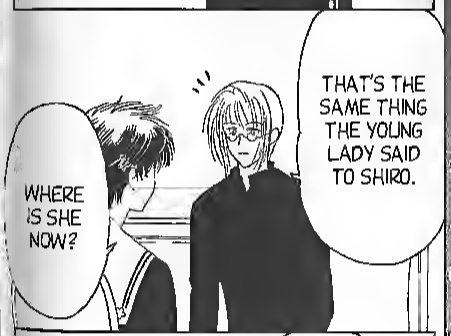
...HUH?
OF COURSE SHIRO'S JOB IS TO PROTECT YOU, HINA-CHAN.
BUT I DON'T THINK HE WOULD HAVE GONE AS FAR AS HE DID FOR YOU JUST BECAUSE OF A JOB.

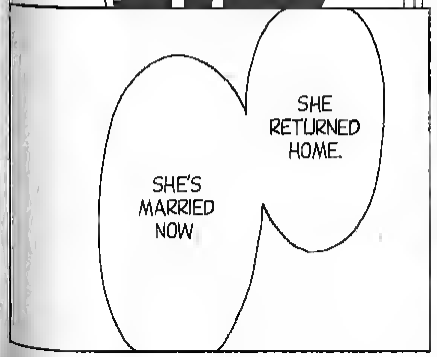
BY THROWING HERSELF IN FRONT OF SHIRO, THE YOUNG LADY TOOK A BULLET MEANT FOR *HIM*.
A YOUNG LADY WHO WAS UNDER HIS PROTECTION WAS INJURED.
DO YOU KNOW WHY SHIRO QUIT THE POLICE FORCE?
SHE SURVIVED BUT SHE SUFFERED A WOUND ON HER LEG THAT WILL NEVER DISAPPEAR.
WHY DID SHE DO THAT...
...FOR SENSEI...?
BECAUSE SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM
SHIRO WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT HER, BUT INSTEAD, SHE SAVED HIS LIFE...


. BY ALLOWING HER TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM
HE'S ALWAYS FELT GUILTY FOR ALLOWING HER TO BE HARMED...
BUT SHIRO WILL NEVER FORGET HER.

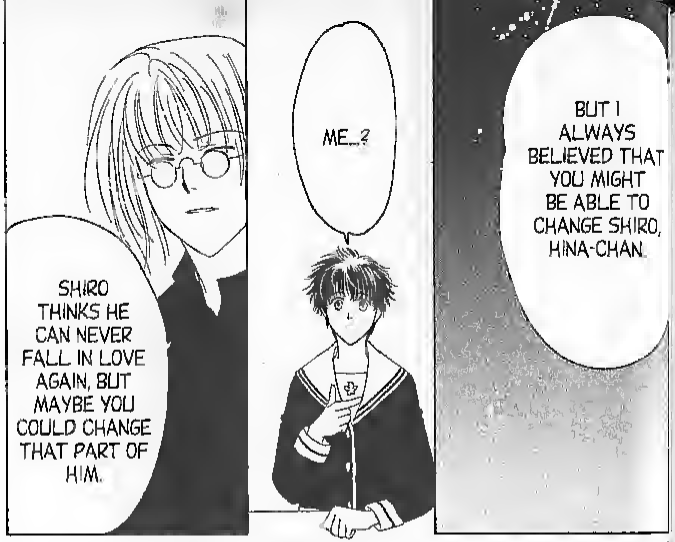
MOST LIKELY.
.....
DID SENSEI...
...LOVE HER BACK?
THAT'S WHY HE NEVER WANTS TO GET EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED WITH ANYONE.
I THINK HE'S AFRAID OF FALLING IN LOVE, OR HAVING SOMEONE LOVE HIM.

I UNDER-STAND.
NOBODY WANTS THE PERSON THEY LOVE TO BE HURT.


WHERE IS SHE NOW?
THAT'S THE SAME THING THE YOUNG LADY SAID TO SHIRO.


SHE'S MARRIED NOW
SHE RETURNED HOME.

EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS A DIPLOMATIC GUEST, AND WAS DUE TO RETURN TO HER COUNTRY.


SHIRO THINKS HE CAN NEVER FALL IN LOVE AGAIN, BUT MAYBE YOU COULD CHANGE THAT PART OF HIM.
ME...?
BUT I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO CHANGE SHIRO, HINA-CHAN.

...I WAS JUST ANOTHER JOB.
BUT TO SENSEI...

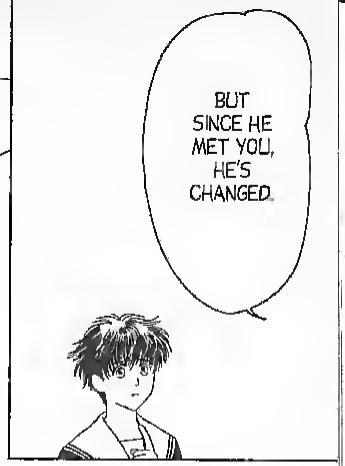
HE ALWAYS LOOKED SO TENSE... HE NEVER LAUGHED... IT WAS PAINFUL FOR ME AND KIZU TO WATCH HIM.
I SAW HOW SHIRO WAS AFTER THAT INCIDENT.

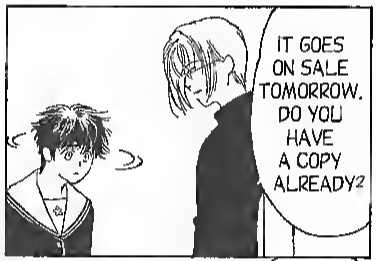
BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
...NOT TO LOVE ANYONE.

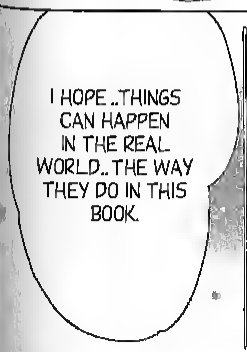
I APOLOGIZE...
...FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...FOR LYING TO YOU ALL THIS TIME.
SENSEI...

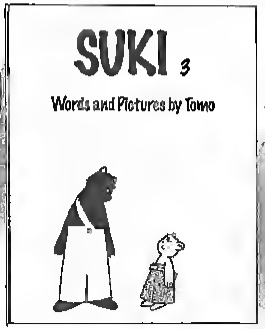
15

SUKI™









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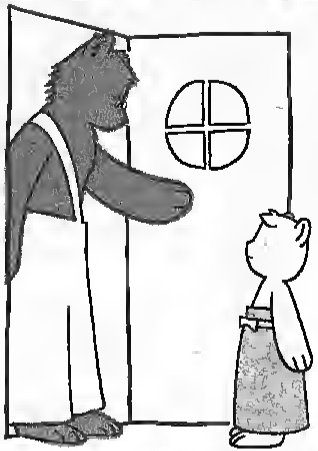


AND SO THE LITTLE BEAR VISITED KUMA-SAN'S HOUSE AGAIN.

SHE KNOCKED ON THE DOOR.

KUMA-SAN, AS USUAL, WOULD NOT LET HER INSIDE, BUT THESE DAYS HE WOULD AT LEAST COME OUT AND ALLOW HER TO PEEK IN.

1

Kuma is the Japanese word for bear

WHEN HE WAS NOT TOO BUSY, HE WOULD COME OUT TO THE YARD, AND ALTHOUGH IT WOULD ONLY BE FOR A SHORT WHILE, HE WOULD CHAT WITH THE LITTLE BEAR.

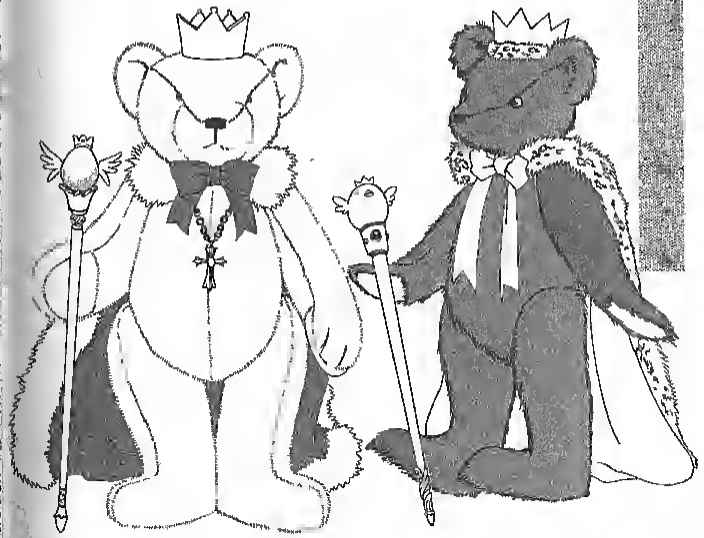
USUALLY, IT WAS THE LITTLE BEAR WHO DID ALL THE TALKING, BUT SHE WAS JUST HAPPY TO SPEND TIME WITH KUMA-SAN.

SHE WOULD TALK ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS. ABOUT THE DREAM SHE HAD LAST NIGHT. THE THINGS SHE DID THIS MORNING. HOW THE HONEY SHE ATE FOR LUNCH TASTED.

AND WHEN SHE TALKED, IT MADE THE LITTLE BEAR VERY HAPPY TO KNOW THAT KUMA-SAN WAS LISTENING INTENTLY. AND SO SHE TALKED EVEN MORE.

2

SUKI. (I LOVE YOU.)
DAKARA SUKI. (THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU.)

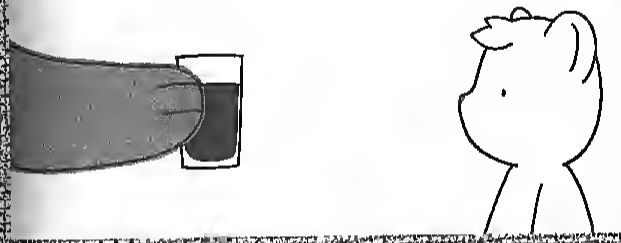


THE LITTLE BEAR ASKED KUMA-SAN,
"WHERE DID YOU FIND THESE BERRIES...?"
KUMA-SAN GAVE HER A GRUFF LOOK, AS HE
ALWAYS DID, BUT HE ANSWERED, "I USED THE
BERRIES THAT YOU PICKED."

THIS MADE THE LITTLE BEAR EVEN HAPPIER.
KUMA-SAN HAD USED THE BERRIES SHE HAD
PICKED FOR HIM!

AFTER TALKING FOR A VERY LONG TIME, THE LITTLE
BEAR BECAME VERY THIRSTY.
THE LITTLE BEAR THOUGHT TO HERSELF, "I WISH I COULD
DRINK SOMETHING. MAYBE I WILL DRINK SOME MILK
WHEN I GET HOME." AND AT THAT VERY MOMENT, SHE
SAW A CUP THRUST OUT IN FRONT OF HER.

IT WAS KUMA-SAN, OFFERING HER A DRINK.



"THANK YOU VERY MUCH," THE
LITTLE BEAR SAID WITH A SMILE.
"WHY ARE YOU THANKING ME?"
KUMA-SAN ANSWERED WITH A
SCOWL.
BUT THE LITTLE BEAR REALIZED THERE
WAS NO ANGER IN KUMA-SAN'S
EYES. IN FACT, WHEN SHE LOOKED
CLOSER, HE ALMOST LOOKED A LITTLE
BASHFUL.

"KUMA-SAN IS A VERY NICE BEAR,"
THE LITTLE BEAR THOUGHT TO HERSELF
AS SHE DRANK. "JUST AS I HAD
THOUGHT FROM THE START."
THE JUICE WAS VERY GOOD AND
SWEET.

AND THE LITTLE BEAR WAS EVEN
HAPPIER THAN SHE HAD BEEN BEFORE.

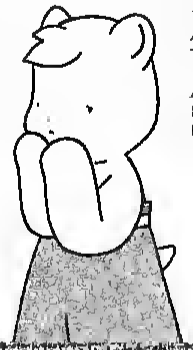
THE LITTLE BEAR WAS VERY SURPRISED.
"UM, WHAT'S THIS?" SHE ASKED.
"IF YOU DON'T WANT IT, THAT'S FINE," SAID KUMA-SAN.
HE BEGAN TO TAKE AWAY THE CUP.
THE LITTLE BEAR THOUGHT TO HERSELF. KUMA-SAN HAD SAID
THAT IF SHE DIDN'T WANT
IT, THAT WOULD BE FINE. WHICH MUST HAVE MEANT THAT HE
HAD OFFERED THE CUP FOR HER TO DRINK.
SO SHE SAID VERY
QUICKLY, "NO, PLEASE,
I'LL DRINK IT. DON'T TAKE
IT AWAY."

AND THE LITTLE BEAR
TOOK THE CUP FROM
KUMA-SAN'S PAW. INSIDE
WAS JUICE MADE FROM
BERRIES.

THE LITTLE BEAR BECAME VERY SAD.

"I WAS SAVING THOSE BERRIES," SHE THOUGHT.
"THOSE BERRIES REMINDED ME OF WHEN KUMA-SAN CAME TO SAVE ME.
AND KUMA-SAN USED SOME OF THEM TO MAKE JUICE FOR ME."

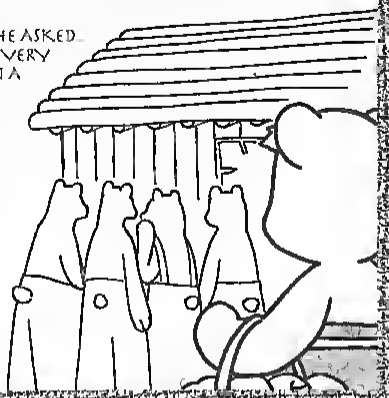
AS THE LITTLE BEAR THOUGHT SADLY TO HERSELF, THE OTHER BEARS GATHERED BEHIND HER AND BEGAN TO TALK.



7 ONE DAY, THE LITTLE BEAR BROUGHT A BASKETFUL OF APPLES SHE HAD PICKED IN THE FOREST, IN HOPES OF SHARING THEM WITH KUMA-SAN. BUT WHEN SHE ARRIVED AT HOME, SHE SAW SEVERAL BEARS GATHERED THERE.

"DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?" SHE ASKED. ONE OF THE BEARS ANSWERED, VERY EMPHATICALLY, "THERE'S BEEN A BURGLARY!"

THE LITTLE BEAR WAS VERY SURPRISED. SHE RUSHED INTO HER HOME. THE WINDOWS WERE BROKEN, HER BELONGINGS HAD BEEN TOSSED AROUND AND EVERY ROOM WAS A MESS.



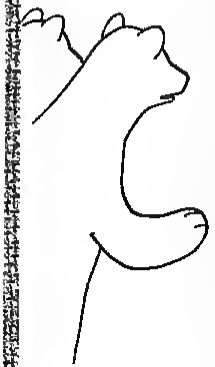
8 ANOTHER BEAR ASKED HER, "WAS ANYTHING STOLEN?"

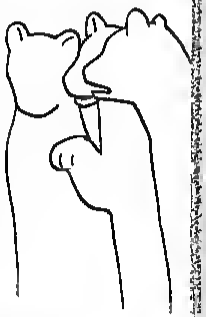
SHE REPLIED, "THE BERRIES I LEFT IN THE KITCHEN ARE GONE."

SHE MEANT THE BERRIES SHE HAD PICKED IN THE WOODS, WHEN KUMA-SAN HAD RESCUED HER FROM THE CROWS. THE LITTLE BEAR WAS SO HAPPY KUMA-SAN HAD SAVED HER THAT SHE WAS DRYING THE BERRIES AS A MEMENTO.

"I WONDER, WHO DID IT?"
"WHO BROKE IN TO HER HOUSE?"
AND THEN SOMEONE SAID, "I'LL BET *HE* DID IT."

THEY ALL BEGAN TO CHIME IN, "THAT'S RIGHT. HE PROBABLY DID."
"HE WAS AN OUTSIDER TO BEGIN WITH."
"I HEARD HE DID SOME BAD THINGS IN HIS LAST TOWN TOO."
"I ALWAYS HAD A FEELING HE WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS."
"IT'S HIM. I KNOW IT."



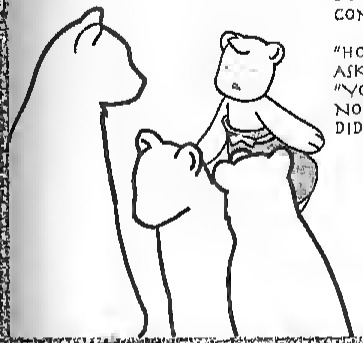


SOMEHOW, ALL THE OTHER BEARS WERE CONVINCED THAT THE TALL BEAR WITH GLASSES NEXT DOOR WAS THE ONE WHO HAD BROKEN IN.

"THAT'S NOT TRUE," PROTESTED THE LITTLE BEAR. "KUMA-SAN WOULD NEVER DO THAT!"

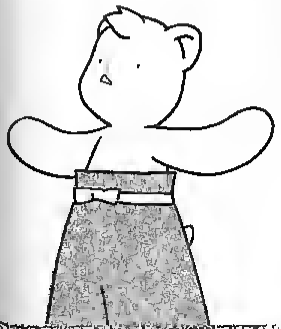
BUT THE OTHER BEARS WERE NOT CONVINCED.

"HOW DO YOU KNOW?" THEY ASKED. "YOU WEREN'T HOME, SO THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD KNOW WHO DID IT."



"I DON'T KNOW, BUT I KNOW IT WASN'T KUMA-SAN." THE LITTLE BEAR WAS DESPERATE TO MAKE THE OTHER BEARS UNDERSTAND.

"KUMA-SAN IS A VERY GOOD BEAR," SHE CONTINUED. "WHEN I WAS ATTACKED BY CROWS IN THE WOODS, KUMA-SAN CAME TO MY RESCUE. LATELY, HE'S EVEN STARTED TALKING TO ME ... AND HE LISTENS TO ME TOO."



BUT THE OTHER BEARS WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

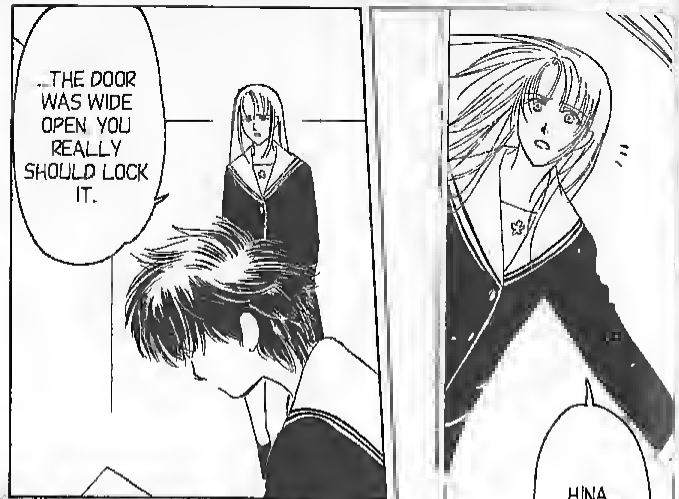
"I'LL BET HE JUST GOT YOU TO TRUST HIM SO YOU WOULD TALK ABOUT THE THINGS IN YOUR HOUSE!"
"THAT'S HOW HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN YOUR KITCHEN."
"WHAT A DESPICABLE BEAR," THEY ALL CHIMED.

THE LITTLE BEAR SHOOK HER HEAD. "THAT'S NOT TRUE. THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL! KUMA-SAN WOULD NEVER DO A THING LIKE THAT."

"HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?" THEY RETORTED.

THE LITTLE BEAR ANSWERED, STRONG AND CLEAR, "I CAN TELL WHEN I LOOK INTO HIS EYES."

"WHEN I LOOK IN HIS EYES, I CAN TELL WHAT KIND OF BEAR HE IS, AND I KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING. THE EYES NEVER LIE."

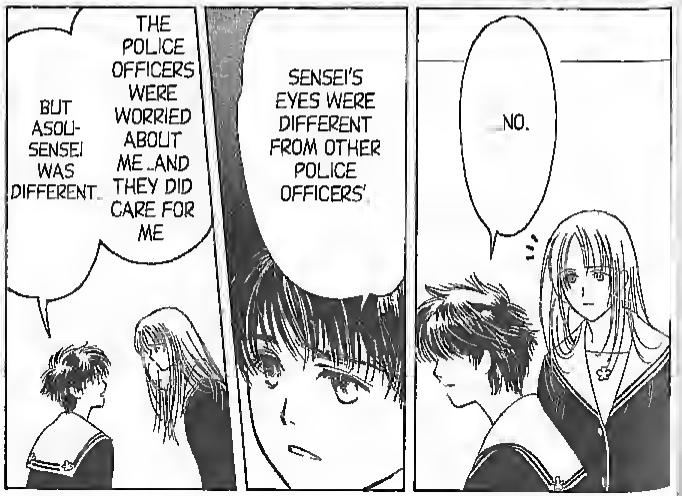

...THE DOOR WAS WIDE OPEN. YOU REALLY SHOULD LOCK IT.

HINA...

ARE YOU THINKING...
...ABOUT ASOU-SENSEI AGAIN?

"THE EYES NEVER LIE.."

THE LOOK OF A POLICEMAN...?

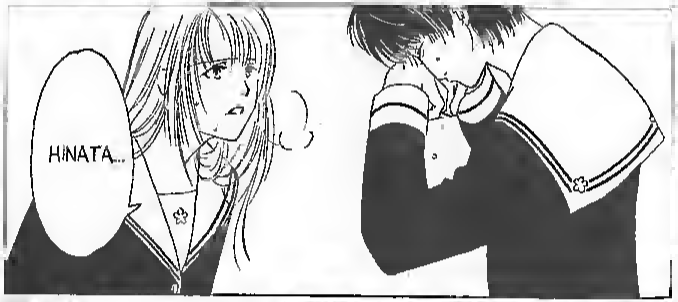

BUT ASOU-SENSEI WAS DIFFERENT.
THE POLICE OFFICERS WERE WORRIED ABOUT ME..AND THEY DID CARE FOR ME
SENSEI'S EYES WERE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER POLICE OFFICERS'
NO.

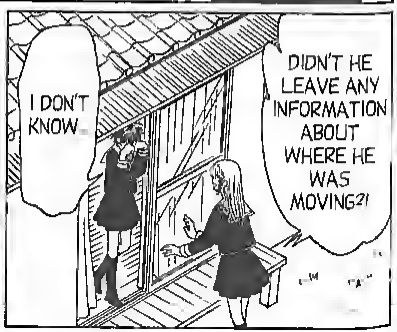
THEN IT HIT ME... IT WAS THE LOOK OF A COP.
THERE ALWAYS WERE A LOT OF POLICE OFFICERS AROUND YOUR HOUSE...
ALL THIS TIME I'D BEEN THINKING--THE WAY ASOU-SENSEI LOOKED--I'D SEEN THAT LOOK BEFORE.
I REALIZED IT HAD TO DO WITH YOUR PAST KIDNAPPING INCIDENTS...
...BUT FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY.

SENSEI'S EYES WERE MORE.. MORE..
BUT HE'S DIFFERENT
BUT..YOU KNOW ASOU-SENSEI IS A FORMER POLICE OFFICER. HIS JOB WAS TO PROTECT YOU, HINA..
..THEY WERE JUST..SO KIND.
THEN..MAYBE ASOU-SENSEI REALLY WAS SHOWING YOU HIS TRUE FEELINGS, HINATA
"WHEN I LOOK IN HIS EYES, I CAN TELL WHAT KIND OF BEAR HE IS, AND I KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING."
"THE EYES NEVER LIE."
I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW.
..TOUKO-CHAN.

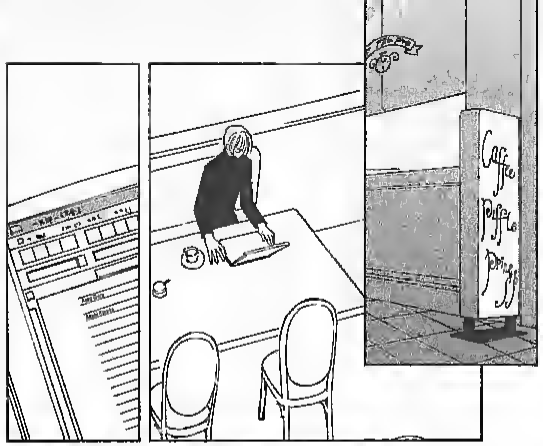
HINATA--
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?!
カチ
カチ
HEY--
WAIT,
HINA!
SENSE!!
SENSE!!
WHAT?
WHAT DO
YOU
UNDERSTAND?
HINA?!
MY OWN
TRUE
FEELINGS!

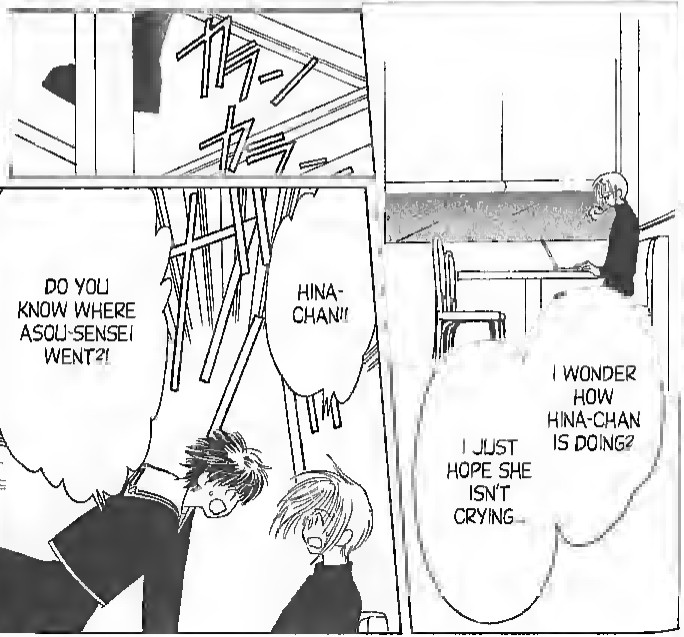
...AND SO IS SENSEI.
HIS THINGS ARE ALL GONE...
...HE'S NOT HERE


HINATA...


I DON'T KNOW
DIDN'T HE LEAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT WHERE HE WAS MOVING?!

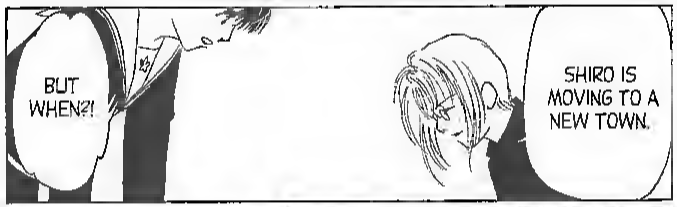
HUFF HUFF
YOU CAN'T GO IN PEOPLE'S HOUSES WITHOUT PERMISSION.


Caffe Peppe


カーン
カーン
DO YOU KNOW WHERE ASOU-SENSEI WENT?!
HINA-CHAN!!
I WONDER HOW HINA-CHAN IS DOING?
I JUST HOPE SHE ISN'T CRYING...

IF YOU GIVE UP, IT ALL ENDS HERE!
YOU CAN'T GIVE UP!

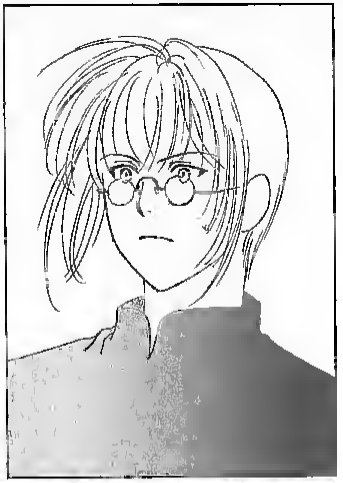
TOMO-KUN!!
ISN'T THERE SOMEBODY?
SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS SENSEI?!

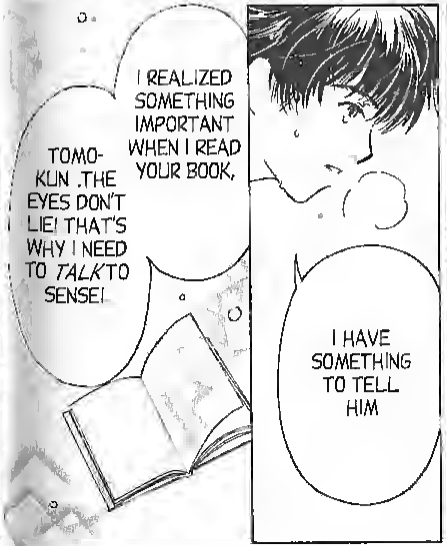

BUT WHEN?!
SHIRO IS MOVING TO A NEW TOWN.

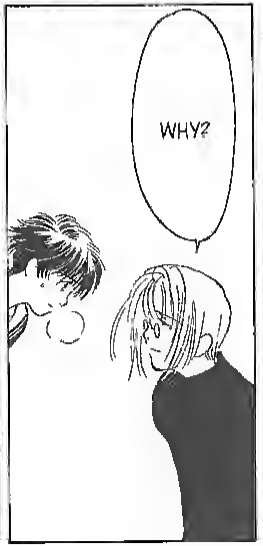
HUFF HUFF

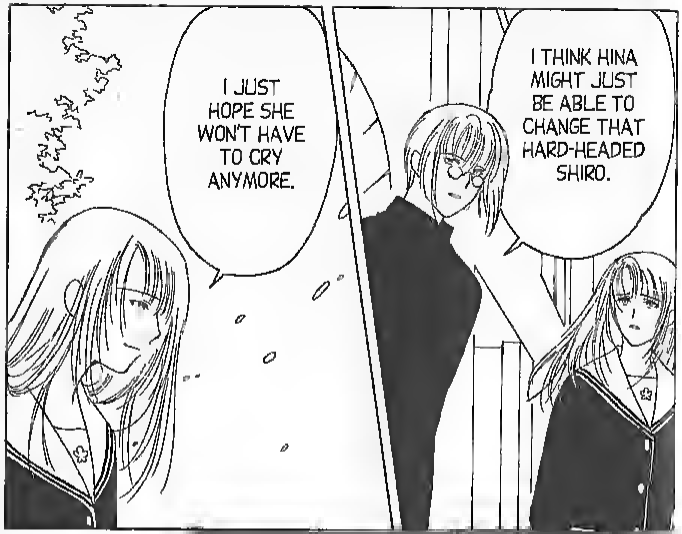
TODAY

I NEED TO SEE SENSE!!

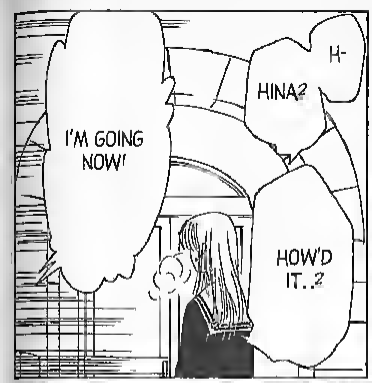


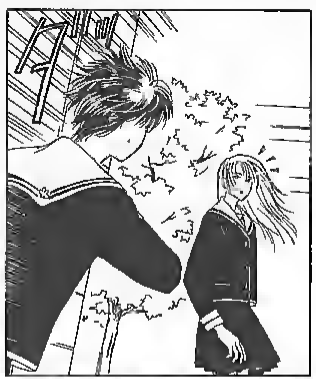

TOMO-KUN .THE EYES DON'T LIE! THAT'S WHY I NEED TO *TALK* TO SENSE!
I REALIZED SOMETHING IMPORTANT WHEN I READ YOUR BOOK.
I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL HIM


WHY?

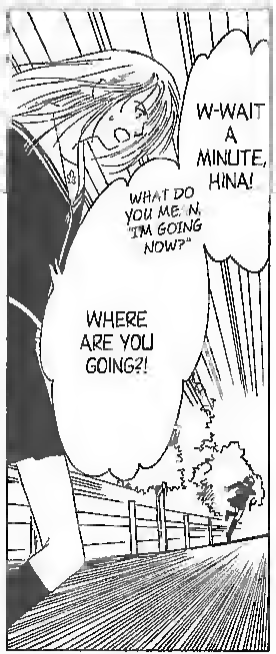

I JUST HOPE SHE WON'T HAVE TO CRY ANYMORE.
I THINK HINA MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO CHANGE THAT HARD-HEADED SHIRO.

I THINK SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

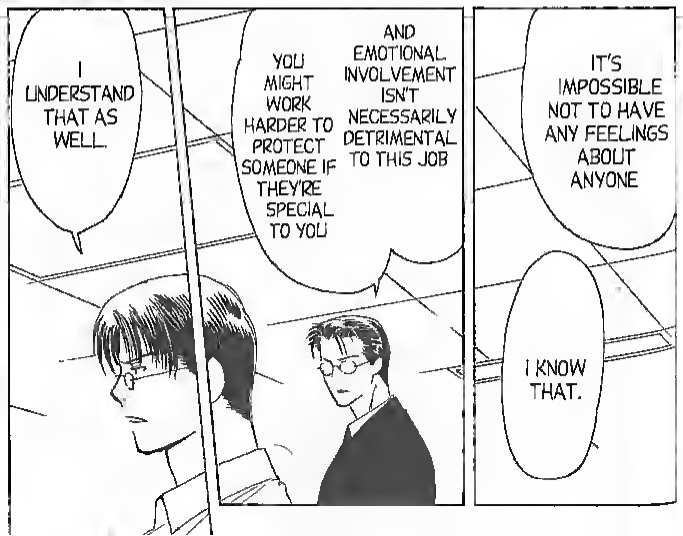

I'M GOING NOW!
H-
HINA?
HOW'D IT..?



TO SEE SHIRO, OF COURSE.
TO-TOUKO SHINOHARA.
MY NAME IS TOMOAKI NAMIYA.


W-WAIT A MINUTE, HINA!
WHAT DO YOU ME. N "I'M GOING NOW?"
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

YOU ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR WORK.
BUT YOUR FEELINGS TOWARD ASAHI-SAN WEREN'T JUST PROFESSIONAL, WERE THEY?
NO, IT WASN'T.


I UNDERSTAND THAT AS WELL.
YOU MIGHT WORK HARDER TO PROTECT SOMEONE IF THEY'RE SPECIAL TO YOU
AND EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT ISN'T NECESSARILY DETRIMENTAL TO THIS JOB
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO HAVE ANY FEELINGS ABOUT ANYONE
I KNOW THAT.

YOU'RE LEAVING WITHOUT EVEN SAYING GOODBYE TO ASAHI-SAN
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
..ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT WITH THIS?

DON'T LIE.
MY JOB IS FINISHED. I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY TO HER.

WELL, OF COURSE OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS BASED PURELY ON WORK..
ABOUT WHAT?!
YOU MAY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN

SHE'S ALWAYS SMILING, BUT SHE MUST BE LONELY.
SHE LIVES IN THAT GREAT BIG HOUSE ALL BY HERSELF.
...AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ASAHI-SAN?
I...
SOMEONE WHO WOULD JUST SPEND TIME WITH HER... THAT'S PROBABLY WHY SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH ME.
AND THAT'S WHERE I CAME INTO THE PICTURE.

HINA HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED SEVERAL TIMES SINCE SHE WAS LITTLE.
AND EVERY TIME, HER FATHER BLAMED HER SERVANTS OR DRIVERS, SAYING THAT THEY DIDN'T TAKE ENOUGH PRECAUTIONS.
BUT SHE JUST THOUGHT I WAS JUST A GOOD PERSON.
SINCE SHE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO BE BLAMED ANYMORE FOR HER SAKE, SHE DECIDED TO LIVE ON HER OWN, STARTING IN HIGH SCHOOL.
HER FATHER SAID IF SHE WANTED TO LIVE ALONE SO BADLY, HE WOULDN'T HELP HER OUT AT ALL.
BUT OF COURSE HE WORRIED ABOUT HER SAFETY, SO HE HIRED ME.

SENSEI! NO--ASOU-SAN!
I FORCED HIM TO TELL ME!
THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO SAY TO YOU!
TO SAY TO ME?
ASOU-SENSEI!!
TOMO-KUN...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
..TOLD ME WHERE YOU WERE!
YOU..!
I'M JUST A BODYGUARD I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THINGS LIKE THIS.
I TOLD YOU TO STAY ON TOP OF THE SITUATION!
LOOK, IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET ON MY CASE FOR LYING TO YOU...
IT'S NOT THAT!
WHEN I FOUND OUT YOU WERE JUST BEING NICE TO ME BECAUSE OF YOUR JOB, I CRIED
AND I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT.

AT FIRST, I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU BECAUSE YOU DID SO MANY THINGS THAT I LOVED.

BUT FROM NOW ON, ASOU-SAN... WHATEVER YOU DO FOR YOURSELF... I'LL LOVE YOU FOR THAT.

WHY...?
BUT, YOU KNOW ...I REALLY DO LOVE YOU, ASOU-SAN.
BECAUSE WHEN YOU WERE WITH ME, YOUR EYES WERE ALWAYS SO KIND.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN JUST WORK TO YOU, BUT TO ME ...I LOVED YOU FOR IT.

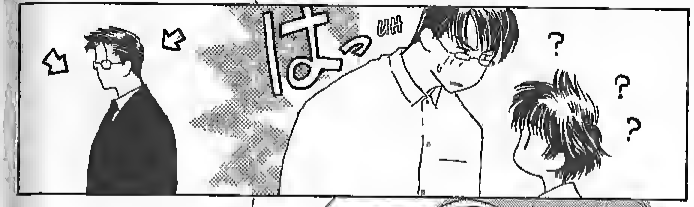
YOU WIN.
..ALL RIGHT.

I MEAN THAT I..
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THAT'S WHY..
..THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU, ASOU-SAN.

OH, NO! IT'S TIME FOR MY SHINKANSEN* TRAIN!
WHAT?!
ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE IT? ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT? SHOULD I RUN TO THE PLATFORM WITH YOU?
I'M SORRY! I'M MAKING YOU LATE!
YAYY!
YAYYYY!
YAYYYY!!!

*Shinkansen train: bullet train



SO...I CAN CALL YOU?!
YEAH

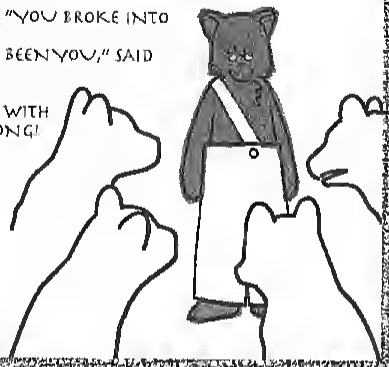
WHAT'S THIS?
MY PHONE NUMBER
YOURS, ASOU-SAN?!
NO
NO
NO
I SUPPOSE YOU WANTED SOMEBODY ELSE'S?

"SO YOU THINK I'M A BURGLAR," SAID A VOICE FROM BEHIND.

THE LITTLE BEAR TURNED AROUND, AND THERE WAS KUMA SAN, GLASSES AND ALL.

"YES," SAID ONE OF THE BEARS. "YOU BROKE INTO HER HOUSE, DIDN'T YOU?"
"THAT'S RIGHT. IT MUST HAVE BEEN YOU," SAID ANOTHER.

BUT THE LITTLE BEAR SHOUTED WITH ALL HER MIGHT, "YOU'RE WRONG! IT WASN'T KUMA-SAN!"



KUMA-SAN WALKED INTO THE KITCHEN. EVERYONE WATCHED TO SEE WHAT HE WOULD DO. BUT KUMA-SAN JUST KNELT DOWN AND PICKED SOMETHING UP.

IN HIS PAW WAS A BLACK BIRD FEATHER.

"THAT'S A CROW'S FEATHER," THE LITTLE BEAR SAID.

THEN KUMA-SAN SAID, "REMEMBER WHEN THE CROWS CHASED YOU OUT OF THE FOREST WHILE YOU WERE PICKING BERRIES?"

THE LITTLE BEAR NODDED HER HEAD. "THE CROWS MUST HAVE REMEMBERED THAT, AND COME TO STEAL YOUR BERRIES," THE LITTLE BEAR THOUGHT THAT MADE PERFECT SENSE.

THEN ALL OF THE OTHER BEARS WHO HAD ACCUSED KUMA-SAN OF BEING A BURGLAR WENT SILENT. "OH, WELL, WE MADE A MISTAKE," THEY MUMBLED TO THEMSELVES, AND WALKED OUT OF THE LITTLE BEAR'S HOUSE.

THE LITTLE BEAR AND KUMA-SAN WERE ALL ALONE.

THE LITTLE BEAR BOWED HER HEAD AND SAID, "I'M SORRY I CAUSED YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE. I KNOW HOW YOU HATE TROUBLE, KUMA-SAN."

BUT KUMA-SAN DID NOT SAY ANYTHING AT ALL.

INSTEAD, HE BEGAN TO CLEAN UP THE LITTLE BEAR'S KITCHEN.

THE LITTLE BEAR SAID, "OH, NO, I'LL DO THAT!" BUT KUMA-SAN DID NOT ANSWER. HE CONTINUED TO CLEAN.

SUDDENLY THE LITTLE BEAR REALIZED THAT KUMA-SAN WAS HELPING HER. SHE BEGAN TO FEEL HAPPY AGAIN.

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Nanase Ohkawa
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Mokona Apapa

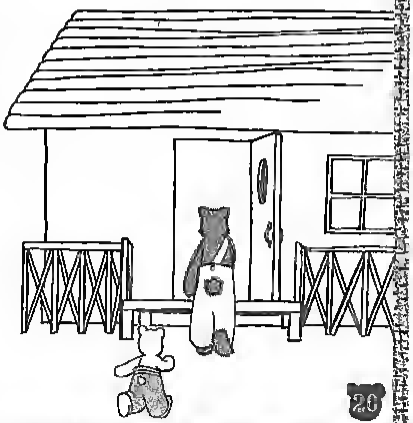
DESIGN
Nanase Ohkawa
Satsuki Igarashi

BY THE TIME THEY FINISHED CLEANING, IT WAS ALREADY NIGHT.

"THANK YOU VERY MUCH," SAID THE LITTLE BEAR.
"EVERYTHING IS SO CLEAN! PLEASE... AS A THANK-YOU GIFT, LET ME COOK YOU DINNER. OH! BUT IF I START COOKING NOW, IT WILL BE VERY LATE BEFORE IT IS SERVED."

JUST THEN, KUMA-SAN SAID SOMETHING...BUT HE SAID IT VERY QUIETLY, SO THE LITTLE BEAR COULD NOT HEAR.
"WHAT? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?" SHE ASKED. KUMA-SAN TRIED TO SAY IT ONCE MORE.
"YOU...CAN COME TO MY HOUSE. I ALREADY HAVE DINNER PREPARED."
"REALLY?" THE LITTLE BEAR WAS TOO HAPPY FOR WORDS.
KUMA-SAN WAS INVITING HER TO DINNER. THIS MEANT HE WAS FINALLY ALLOWING HER TO COME INSIDE HIS HOUSE.

KUMA-SAN TURNED HIS FACE AWAY, BUT THE LITTLE BEAR COULD TELL BY HIS EYES THAT HE WAS JUST FEELING BASHFUL.
"HURRY UP," KUMA-SAN SAID, AND STARTED BACK TOWARD HIS HOUSE.
"OKAY!" SAID THE LITTLE BEAR, RUNNING AS FAST AS SHE COULD TO CATCH UP. AND THEN, SO NO ONE COULD HEAR, SHE ADDED, "I HOPE WE CAN BE EVEN BETTER FRIENDS NOW."



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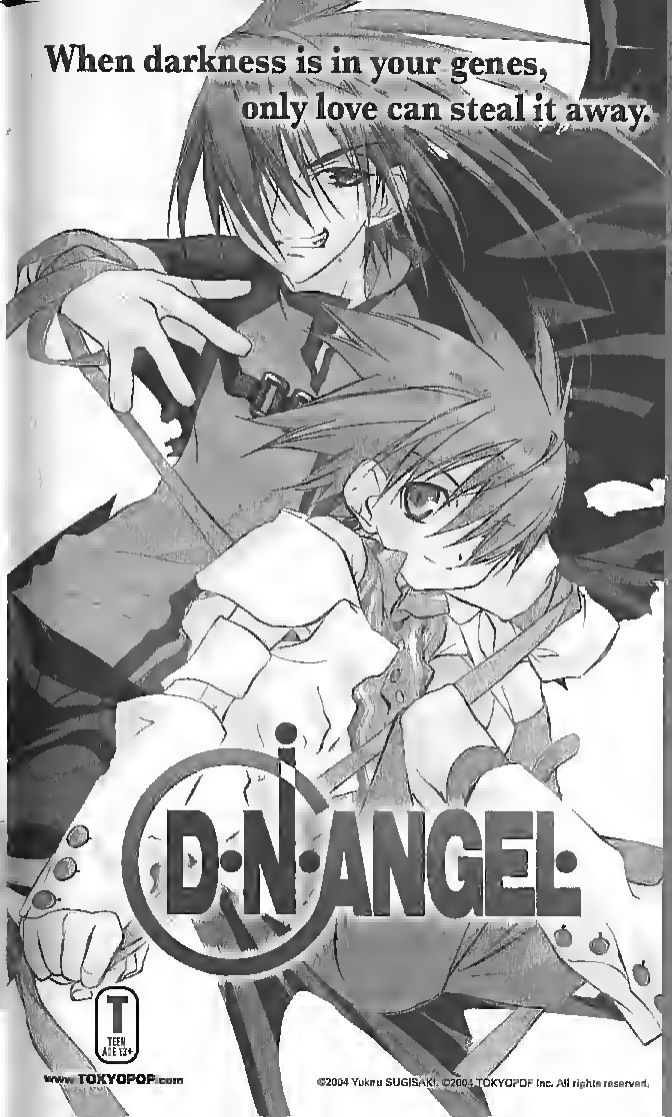
When darkness is in your genes,
only love can steal it away.



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JING: KING OF BANDITS - TWILIGHT TALES
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KINDAICHI CASE FILES, THE
KING OF HELL
KODOCHA: SANA'S STAGE
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LEGEND OF CHUN HYANG, THE
LES BIJOUX
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MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH II
MAHOROMATIC: AUTOMATIC MAIDEN
MAN OF MANY FACES
MARMALADE BOY
MARS
MARS: HORSE WITH NO NAME
MINK
MIRACLE GIRLS
MIYUKI-CHAN IN WONDERLAND
MODEL
MY LOVE
NECK AND NECK
ONE
ONE I LOVE, THE
PARADISE KISS
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STOP!

This is the back of the book. You wouldn't want to spoil a great ending!

This book is printed "manga-style," in the authentic Japanese right-to-left format. Since none of the artwork has been flipped or altered, readers get to experience the story just as the creator intended. You've been asking for it, so TOKYOPOP® delivered; authentic, hot-off-the-press, and far more fun!

DIRECTIONS

If this is your first time reading manga-style, here's a quick guide to help you understand how it works.

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